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Expense claims and policies of former Health Regions

CALGARY – As stated earlier this year, Alberta Health Services (AHS) is not commenting on the expense policies or individual expense claims made under the former Health Regions and other health entities that predated AHS and no longer exist. A statement to this effect can be found at: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7486.asp>.

Lynn Redford, who was referenced in the recent release of documents requested under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP), was at that time in a government relations role in the former Calgary Health Region.

The policies and practices of the former Health Regions were not well defined and were open to interpretation. That is not the case at AHS. The policies at practices have been clarified and formalized in written policy.

Ms. Redford and the Calgary Health Region were meeting the expectations and norms at that time. When AHS was created, Ms. Redford took on new responsibilities, including a new role since Premier Redford was elected.

Action has been taken to ensure that AHS is a politically neutral organization and does not support or endorse any political party or candidate at any level of government. On March 28, 2012, AHS released a corporate policy that provides specific internal guidelines covering federal/provincial/municipal and political contributions. It can be found at: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/Bylaws/ahs-pol-political-activity.pdf>.

AHS has clarified current expense policy with all staff and, in particular, management and senior leadership to ensure current government legislation and AHS policies and expectations are well understood. Ongoing education will occur.

AHS has also strengthened its travel and expense policy this fall. It can be found at: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/Policies/ahs-pol-expenses.pdf>.

Actions taken include:

- AHS has adopted the policies recently released by the Alberta Government for travel, meal and hospitality expenses and the public disclosure of approved expense reports submitted by executive staff members. The new policy took effect Oct. 15, 2012, and it strengthened AHS' already stringent requirements around what is permissible for reimbursement as an expense.
- Since the formation of AHS, there has been a very strong policy in place to mitigate inappropriate expense claims. For instance, employees and executive continue to be required to provide detailed receipts to support claims; strict controls on who approves expense claims are in place.
- The new policy incorporates our existing strong measures and controls and brings the AHS policy in-line with the recently released Alberta Government expense policy.